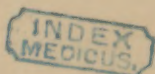


Green (M.)

THE
ANNUAL ADDRESS



DELIVERED BEFORE THE

National Eclectic Medical Association

AT CHICAGO, ILLINOIS,

JUNE 16th, 1880,

By MILBREY GREEN, M. D.



NEW YORK:
ALBERT METZ & CO., PRINTERS,
No. 60 JOHN STREET.
1881.

QUALIFICATIONS, DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE
MEDICAL PROFESSION.

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ILLINOIS, JUNE 16th, 1880.

BY MILBREY GREEN, M. D., PRESIDENT.

Fellows of the National Eclectic Medical Association :

Our Association has abundant cause for congratulation in this auspicious opening of its annual meeting. The large attendance of delegates from every portion of our country augurs well for its success. These annual meetings are a source of pleasure in bringing together physicians, and enabling them to exchange fraternal greetings and confer on matters of personal interest, but we know they do not come to these convocations year after year, from California, Nevada, Nebraska, and other distant portions of the West, and from States on the Gulf and Atlantic coast, from Maine to Louisiana, and from the Central States, leaving their practice and traveling such distances merely for friendly greetings and business advancement. Their presence here is a convincing proof that they are laboring for the elevation of their profession and the good of humanity.

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION AND THE MEANS TO
ACCOMPLISH IT.

Our charter states that the object of our Association is "to maintain organized co-operation between physicians for the purpose of promoting the art and science of medicine and surgery, and the dissemination of beneficial knowledge and an improved practice of medicine."

It is for this object delegates have come together in previous years, and it is why they are here to-day. It is appropriate at this time to speak of what the Association has already accomplished. Its published Transactions are sufficient evidence that it has interpreted its charter obligations in their broadest sense, and recognized the fact that the Association assumed not only a great duty to the profession, but to the community also. They contain not only able papers on every branch of medicine and surgery, but have a proportion of valuable essays on sanitary and hygienic subjects, and matters of vital importance to the community. They also show that the Association has been faithful to the object for which it has been organized, in laboring unremittingly to advance the standard of professional and scientific attainment, and elevate the profession and the community morally, intellectually and physically. It has progressively adopted a higher standard of instruction and professional conduct, and taken a firm stand in maintaining the true dignity and worth of the profession.

As one means of accomplishing this object it has been necessary for it to adopt a code for its government. That code is broad and liberal, requiring only that all physicians shall observe the ordinarily-recognized rules of professional conduct, and of honor, truth, justice, morality and courtesy, in their intercourse with each other, and in their professional relations with their patients and the public. Its legislation has been solely for the purpose of promoting the object for which it was organized and advancing the best interests of the profession and the community. It claims no special control over medical colleges and auxiliary societies, but it requires from them a faithful compliance with its rules. It assures equal rights to all its members, but it demands from them a strict adherence and fidelity to its principles and regulations. This is absolutely essential, in order to maintain its character and fulfill its duties. It has shown its determination to do this by the unanimous expulsion, within three years, of a college that had violated its code of morality, and of two members for unprofessional advertising, and for selling secret nostrums. It recognizes the right of its members to come before the public

in an honorable manner, by an ordinary professional card, but it has given convincing proof that it will not allow any of its members to use the arts and devices of the charlatan. In this respect it requires no more than is demanded by most, if not all, of the State and district societies throughout the country; and there is certainly no member of the Association that would be willing to see any other course adopted. It is a universally-recognized principle of medical morality, that no secret medicines or modes of treatment should be countenanced by the profession, and that no physician should keep from his professional brethren any knowledge he possesses of any beneficial application of medicine or method of cure. All such knowledge is the common property of the profession, and any physician who attempts to keep such knowledge to himself, or to keep secret any medicine or method of cure that can be made useful by others in the treatment of disease, should be held up to the contempt of the profession and the public.

But in maintaining this principle of our Association we must be careful that no injustice is done to our fellows, and no personal motives influence us. If any member is aware of any violation of this principle it is his duty to make it known; but the honor of the profession and the welfare of the Association should be the only motives that actuate him in making the complaint, and he should have the consciousness that he is free from even the taint of the wrong with which he charges his fellow. In our crusade against wrong and wrong-doers, our motto should be that of the Paladin of old—*Sotto l'usbergo del sentirsi puro*. "Under the shield feeling oneself pure," the performance of any duty, however difficult, is rendered possible.

Our Association has accomplished much in its endeavors to fulfill the purpose for which it was organized, but there can be no end to such a work as it has commenced and carried forward. It must continue its work of "disseminating beneficial knowledge," and it must give to the profession and the community not only an "improved practice of medicine," but a constantly improving practice of medicine. It must continue to elevate the standard of medical education and character, and send forth medical practitioners who will not rest satisfied

with anything short of the highest moral, professional, and scientific attainments and social standing. It must continue to "disseminate beneficial knowledge" among the people, and instruct them as to the causes and laws of disease, and what tends to promote, and what prevent, its propagation; and strive to make them understand the laws of individual health and of public health, and how inseparably they are connected; that it is impossible for them to violate physical, intellectual, or moral law, in the smallest degree, without some injury to health and danger to life; that the "cleanliness which is next to godliness" applies as much to moral and intellectual as to physical being, and that "all filth (moral, intellectual, and physical) is absolute poison;" that nature is inexorable, and violation of her laws, whether wilfully or ignorantly, surely brings a penalty, and that the ignorance as well as "the sins of the fathers" is "visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation."

In order to promote the object and continue the noble work of our Association, every member must feel that a portion of this work devolves upon him. Every one can do something. We must keep constantly in mind that we do not exist of ourselves or for ourselves only. We must strive constantly to develop our resources and make use of every means in our power to advance our science. Upon the labors of our profession depend the dearest interests of humanity, and in us inaction is a crime. Ours is no mere business of interest or feeling. Personal emolument and reputation has never been the primary object with the hundreds of our predecessors who have labored to subserve the cause of science and benefit mankind.

THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD INDISPENSABLE TO THE PROMOTION OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

One of the greatest obstacles to a more rapid advance of medicine and surgery has been the skepticism that has always existed in the profession.

Until within a comparatively recent period medicine has been considered by many as a metaphysical and speculative

instead of a positive science, and some medical writers and practitioners still talk of the uncertainty and unreliability of medicine, as though the uncertainty was relative to that science instead of their ignorance. But, as an eminent medical writer says "In Nature's operations, whether on the most minute or expanded scale, there is no uncertainty, indefiniteness or chance-play. Whenever, therefore, it is said, that, on any point, uncertainty exists, it merely shows that, on that point, our knowledge of nature is incomplete. In Medicine the physician's assertion that anything is uncertain is in truth an acknowledgment that on that point his knowledge is only partial. No disease occurs which has not a certain adequate cause, though of that cause we may be ignorant; which has not its chief seat in some definite part of the system, though of that seat we may be unable to satisfy ourselves; which has not produced, at any given time, a precise amount of functional derangement or organic change, though our idea of that amount may be most erroneous; and for which there exist not, in the nature of things, a remedial course, the most appropriate that can be pursued, though we, in our ignorance, may honestly pursue a course much less efficacious, or which shall even aggravate instead of ameliorating or curing. The uncertainty, then, is not in nature or medicine, but is owing to the imperfection of existing knowledge, our constitutional incapacities, our lack of such knowledge as exists and our inability to reduce to practice such knowledge as we possess."

Much of the skepticism we find in our profession is the result of routine practice. Too many practitioners have been in the habit of relying on text-books, and following old authorities in treating disease, instead of making a careful, systematic study of every case, and forming their diagnosis and basing their treatment on their personal experience, observation and an intelligent study and interpretation of symptoms. Their reading is mostly confined to the books on theory and practice they studied while in college, and they naturally fall into the routine methods of practice instead of attempting to make an accurate diagnosis of the disease

before them, and then a correct therapeutics, so as to ascertain the remedy adapted to the form and character of the disease and condition of the patient. They only take into consideration a few of the most striking symptoms, name the disease in accordance with the nosology of their text-books, and either follow the old prescriptions there given, or make a few remedies do duty for all possible conditions. They take no account of the modifications of types of disease, of climatic influences or the idiosyncrasies of their patients. They make no attempts to keep up with the medical improvements of the times. Although they call their profession a science they do not apply the scientific method to their practice, and their treatment of disease is largely empirical. Unreasoning skepticism is but a natural result of such empiricism.

Medicine is a science and the scientific method is the only one that should be followed in its practice. The same adherence to a rigid method of logic and reasoning should be followed in medicine as in any of the other sciences. An accurate diagnosis, based upon a correct pathology, should be the foundation of all medical treatment. The laws of disease are as definite as those of health and the physician should study unremittingly to understand them. In dealing with so complex a mechanism as man it is impossible to avoid errors; but the more closely the physician studies the laws of health and disease the more accurate will be his diagnosis and the more successful his treatment. Every fresh acquirement tends to enlarge our powers of insight. Just as in nature, the higher we ascend the more fully lies the view before us. Every year brings advancement to medicine in a greater accuracy and extension of its facts and a more intimate acquaintance with the phenomena of disease and with the whole range of rational and scientific therapeutics. Valuable instruments to aid us in diagnosis are being constantly invented, and physiological and pathological conditions can be more closely observed than ever before.

INSTRUMENTS FOR DIAGNOSIS INVALUABLE.

In diagnosing and treating general and partial cerebral con-

gestion, and cerebral anæmia, the ophthalmoscope is as indispensable as in diseases of the eyes, and it is of great value, as a diagnostic means, in the various forms of sclerosis affecting the brain and spinal cord, the several varieties of cerebral meningitis, cerebral hæmorrhage, chronic encephalitis, cerebral softening, meningeal hæmorrhage, chronic hydrocephalus, tumors of the brain, general paralysis, contusion and compression of the brain, atrophy of the brain, chronic myelitis, locomotor ataxia, tetanus, epilepsy, essential convulsions, insanity, and diseases of the nervous system. It is also a great aid in therapeutical diagnosis, as, for example, in demonstrating the effects of the bromides or ergot in cerebral congestion, thereby enabling us to pursue an active treatment until the condition is relieved, with the same certainty we can feel in watching the effects of some applications to the surface of the body. In cerebral anæmia it demonstrates as clearly the effects of nitrite of amyl or spirituous liquors, and other remedies like phosphorus, nux vomica, etc. It is also a positive guide in both diseases in the use of the galvanic current, enabling us to decide with certainty the strength of the current and the length of time it should be used.

How distinctly, too, the microscope indicates the pathological conditions existing in many forms of diseases of the kidneys. It also aids us greatly in our diagnosis of disease of the lungs, and of suspected malignant diseases of the liver and stomach. In like manner it gives positive aid in our diagnosis of the character of the secretions from the uterine cavity, the bladder and all the mucous surfaces. It is valuable, also, in sometimes giving us a clue to the causes of diseased action, by making optically demonstrable the abnormal cell-growths, and enabling us to make a successful study of the blood in health and disease. With it we can decide positively as to the benign or malignant character of a section of any growth, and demonstrate whether it is fibrous, myxomatous, cartilaginous or bony.

The sphygmograph and stethoscope enable us to make a comparatively accurate diagnosis of the condition of the heart, lungs and circulation. The clinical thermometer is now quite indispensable as an aid in the diagnosis and prognosis of every form of disease.

The laryngoscope, otoscope, the various specula, the æthesiometer and other instruments for diagnosis, beside those mentioned, enable us to decide with almost unerring certainty as to the conditions before us, when without them we should feel doubtful.

QUALIFICATIONS OF PHYSICIANS.

But now that "medicine has developed into a symmetrical science, affiliated with the other natural sciences, studied by the same methods and the same appliances as they are, and, like them, has been planted upon the solid basis of fact and demonstration," there exists a greater necessity for more thoroughly-educated physicians than ever before. Are our colleges doing all in their power to improve the standard of medical education, and graduate only men with such attainments as the present status of medicine demands?

Prof. F. H. Hamilton, of Bellevue College, and President of the American Academy of Medicine, for 1878, in his annual address, after speaking of the intelligence, education, experience, high moral character, etc., of the professors in allopathic colleges throughout the United States, says: "Nevertheless, the fact remains, and is notorious, that these colleges graduate and license to practice, a great number of men who are *totally unqualified*; and you may find some difficulty in understanding how this fact can be made consistent with the reputation for honesty, intelligence and sagacity which I have accorded to a majority of the gentlemen who control these institutions. I am proud of the world-wide and merited reputations of many of my professional brethren, but it cannot be denied, that in the enormous excess which the figures have placed before us—an excess far beyond the wants of the people—there are to be found many thousands who have never been subjected to the proper tests of their ability and from which sources the ranks of empiricism are mainly supplied; who are totally unqualified, and who ought not, in mercy to the people and in justice to those who honestly earned their diplomas, ever to have received a license to practice."

Cannot this portraiture of allopathic colleges and graduates be accepted as true of a portion of our own colleges and graduates ?

DUTY OF THE ASSOCIATION TO OUR COLLEGES.

But the fault is not entirely with the colleges. In looking at our Transactions we find it stated "that this Association pledges its influence for the maintenance of the highest standard of medical education consistent with law and the customs of the times;" and we have required our colleges, from time to time, to adopt a higher standard of education and qualification for candidates for the degree of Doctor of Medicine. Are we fulfilling this pledge of maintaining "the highest standard of education," and doing our duty in sustaining our colleges, and thus enabling them to do what we require? If we require a high standard of education from our colleges, and demand that they shall give us men of solid scientific acquirements, and only graduate those who have a competent knowledge of medicine, we must sustain our colleges morally and pecuniarily, and send them the right kind of students. We must endeavor to sustain well the colleges now in operation, instead of trying to establish more. It would be better for the profession and for the country that no new colleges should be established, unless endowed, and the professors made independent of students' fees. The professors in all our colleges should be thoroughly educated and trained to teach. Without practical experience in the business of teaching the most scientific and finely-educated physician will fail in his attempts to instruct students properly. There are physicians who are willing to occupy a professor's chair for one or two years, or until their reputation is established in their specialty; but as soon as a social and professional position is gained, and a paying practice secured, they are not inclined to make further sacrifice of their time. Every college in the country ought to be sufficiently endowed or sustained to be able to give all its instructors a fair compensation, and retain them as long as they are competent to teach. They would then be able to secure thoroughly-educated and properly-trained

teachers, who would become more valuable every year, as experience has proved that teachers need especial training as much as physicians. And this fact must not be overlooked, namely, that every instructor must possess a tact for teaching or he cannot impart information to advantage, although he may possess the most scientific education. It is possible for us to sustain our colleges and enable them to support their instructors properly, and thus remove the inducement to make a business of matriculating and graduating students, which has proved so demoralizing to some colleges that have depended entirely upon money received for tuition and diplomas. We should then have a right to require every college recognized by our Association to adopt the highest standard of education, and grant diplomas to only such students as reach that standard.

OBLIGATIONS OF MEDICAL SOCIETIES TO COLLEGES.

Our medical societies ought also to give support to colleges by refusing to license men to practice medicine who are not properly educated. The constitution and by-laws of nearly all State societies—Eclectic, allopathic, and homeopathic—contain a provision for licensing men to practice medicine who have never graduated. There was occasion for such a provision in the early days of medicine in this country; but now that there are such great facilities for obtaining a medical education, such a provision is no longer necessary. It is within the power of every person who has an earnest desire to become a physician to secure a proper medical education at some approved college. Some of our State societies have rescinded the provision above referred to, and examine no applicant for membership who has not graduated at some approved college, and all applicants are required to pass a rigid examination by the Board of Censors, in all branches of medicine, before being recommended to the society for membership. In the same States, auxiliary societies admit no one to membership who is not a member of the State society. This provision does not debar any student or physician from participating in all the benefits and instructions to be

obtained in these societies, as every society admits them to all such privileges until such time as they are prepared to comply with the requirements of the Constitution and by-laws, and become members. It would be for the advantage of all societies and the profession if such a provision was adopted by all State societies, as it would lead our colleges to maintain a higher standard of education, by showing them that the profession not only wished for it but demanded it.

Professor Hamilton, in the address before referred to, in speaking of the low standard of education in allopathic colleges, says "that the medical men at large do not feel a deeper interest in this matter than do the professors in medical colleges, and that they cannot be more safely intrusted with our educational interests than the colleges, unless other coincident changes are adopted, is sufficiently shown by the signal failure of county and State censors to do their duty when empowered to examine candidates and grant licenses. In this State they have never demanded a higher grade of qualification than the colleges; and the writer has seen more than one case in which a candidate, rejected by the colleges, has been forthwith admitted by the licensing boards. Neither county nor State censors are, in a majority of cases, chosen on account of any special qualifications which they are supposed to possess as examiners, and it cannot be thought strange, therefore, that they should license incompetent men. A stream cannot rise above its source."

What he says of these allopathic societies is also applicable to some Eclectic societies. Let us endeavor to remedy this evil throughout the country by having our boards of censors and committees on credentials examine carefully all applicants for permanent membership and the credentials of all delegates, and see that the requirements of our Constitution and by-laws are complied with.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRECEPTORS.

I have said that we must give to our colleges moral and financial support, and send them the right kind of students if we desired competent physicians. There are many stu-

dents who wish to have preceptors. If we undertake to instruct students we must be conscientious in the performance of our duties, and possess the requisite qualifications to fulfill the responsibilities of our office. Misdirected or disproportioned studies may prove a great drawback, if they are not fatal to the success of even the most intelligent and earnest student. Preceptors sometimes send students to college with so much to unlearn that their first year is worse than wasted, because it is much more difficult to unlearn than to learn. The preceptor should form a plan of elementary study, and insist that his pupils should follow it in every particular. He should allow them to read only such books as he selects. Desultory reading is always injurious to students. He should examine his pupils every day, and encourage them to question him whenever there is any point they do not thoroughly understand. He should require systematic recitations in all the studies in which they are engaged. If he has not time for this he ought not to undertake their instruction. The physician who is so driven by his practice that he is obliged to question his pupils hurriedly or defer his recitations from day to day, as is sometimes the case, cannot do justice to them, and injures, instead of benefits, those under his charge. Preceptorship is not an unmixed blessing even in its best aspect, and, if improperly conducted, is a decided evil.

We should use our influence as far as possible to send to our colleges students who are not only desirous to study and practice medicine, but possess the qualifications to make good physicians. There will always some enter every college who cannot even grasp the rudiments of medicine, and would never be able to comprehend the principles of the science, nor apply them correctly in the treatment of disease. Occasionally great development of mind has taken place in men of only moderate natural capacity when they have been subjected to a strict discipline and devoted themselves closely to study; but minds originally apathetic and sluggish are seldom aroused by even the most interesting studies. We should seek for students who are endowed with vigorous and inquiring minds, and who have the faculties of observation and judg-

ment, and are industrious and persevering, and will devote themselves to their studies with a strong purpose and earnest will.

NECESSITY OF PRELIMINARY EDUCATION.

A good preliminary education is indispensable to the student of medicine, and if he has already learned how to learn before he enters a medical college he cannot fail to make rapid progress. A thorough course of preparatory education disciplines the mind, trains the faculties, inspires firmness of purpose, and generates a love of knowledge. The habit of acquiring knowledge is not attained at once, and it is not sufficient that the mind is open to receive it, as it never flows in spontaneously. Knowledge must be sought and actively appropriated, and the power of doing this to advantage can only be acquired by systematic training.

Formerly but little was required of medical students in the shape of preparatory education, but in the present state of medicine it cannot be overlooked. As every generation has brought vast accessions to medicine and its collateral sciences, and to practical knowledge of every kind, the medical student of the present day ought not only to possess a greater amount of knowledge than those who entered the profession in former years, but should possess a more cultivated capacity for the acquisition of knowledge. Our common schools are now giving a more thorough education in the elementary branches which are preliminary to a study of the sciences than was formerly to be obtained in some academies and colleges, and even the children of the poor can have the advantages of mental discipline and intellectual training. The children of rich parents can have no excuse for not obtaining a liberal education, and there is but little for even the poor, or those of moderate means, neglecting it. A strong purpose, an earnest will, industry and perseverance, will bring even classical acquirements within the reach of all. Elihu Burritt studied the languages beside the forge of the blacksmith's shop, Abraham Lincoln by the light of pine knots in a log cabin, and Professor Dewees and many other distinguished

physicians obtained their preliminary and medical education while supporting themselves. Professor A. J. Howe studied his Greek while tending a saw-mill, and afterwards honorably wrought his way through Harvard University.

Many eminent men never had the advantages of the school, the academy, and the college, but their indomitable will and perseverance enabled them to obtain the necessary classical and scientific acquirements, and they have always urged the value of these as an important means of acquiring success. It has been the universal testimony of those physicians who have acquired eminence in their profession without having had a good preliminary education, that the lack of it impeded and embarrassed them in every step in their attempts to acquire knowledge amidst the labors and responsibilities of their daily duties throughout their whole career.

CONTINUED STUDY ESSENTIAL.

After graduation the young physician ought to continue his studies with but little respite, feeling that "he has only passed through his novitiate, and that his diploma is only one of the series of honors which lies within his grasp." The necessity of continued and careful study and observation cannot be too strongly urged. Some young physicians neglect their books as soon as they have obtained their diplomas, apparently regarding it as an all-sufficient evidence of their qualifications to practice medicine, and a substitute for future attainments. No advancement in the profession can be reasonably anticipated if such a course is followed. The true physician is a student to the end of his life. There is always time to be found for reading and reflecting even when a practice is established, if we methodize our business, as we can make leisure if we husband the minutes and hours, but the golden hours for study for the young physician are the first years after his graduation.

Many young physicians realize the importance of continued study, and intend to recommence it after a few months respite, but find various reasons for postponing it, and delay commencing from week to week and month to month, until at

last habits of idleness are formed, and their leisure hours are passed in day-dreaming, smoking, riding, or the society of friends, and study gradually appears to them less indispensable and finally becomes repulsive. The physician who neglects his studies in this manner very seldom ever resumes them. This is the greatest error any young physician can commit. The lost opportunities of youth can sometimes be regained, but those of manhood are beyond redemption. Letourneur says: "Do not allow a single day to pass without increasing the treasure of your knowledge and virtue. The use of time is a debt we contract from birth, and it should only be paid with the interest that our life has accumulated."

The physician should realize that he cannot retain even the knowledge that he possesses without study, for as soon as he ceases to acquire he loses. This is true of his elementary as well as professional knowledge, and he ought not only to review, but constantly extend his studies. While in college the student can study but a very small proportion of the best books in any department of medicine, and scarcely glance at any of those relating to the collateral sciences. He should now take these up systematically, and read them in their proper connections. The auxiliary sciences are invaluable to the physician in connection with his own.

With his first cases in practice comes new inducements to study. Each case should be made a study, and everything within his reach should be read that has any reference to it. He should have a note-book in which to record his cases, and make a memorandum of everything connected with each case. Then in taking up his various authors consecutively he can compare his observation in any disease under his charge with their description and become familiar with the disease in all its phases. But the greatest service this will be to him is in acquiring the habit of accurate and patient observation.

A few years ago one of the most distinguished medical writers in this country stated that he had always followed this course, and that it had proved of inestimable benefit to him. He commenced making notes of clinical cases while a student, and he said that even now, after over forty years of

practice, he occasionally glanced over the notes made of cases in the hospital, before his graduation, and found something to aid him in diagnosis and treatment of his obscure cases. Professor Dewees commenced practice in a small village, poor and without patronage, and continued there four years. After his removal to Philadelphia, and when well established in practice, he formed the idea of preparing himself for a teacher of midwifery. His first step was to take the notes and observations he made on all the cases under his care during the first four years of his professional career, and read them carefully in connection with all the best European authorities. These observations formed the basis for his work on midwifery—a work which attracted attention and commendations in Europe as well as in this country. He always said that his four years' study and observations in this obscure village, between the age of 21 and 24 years, was the foundation of his success in life.

Another valuable aid to a physician is an "Index Rerum"—a book in which to condense any item of interest that comes to his notice, indexed in such a manner that it can be found readily. Extracts on any subject, from books, periodicals, newspapers, cases under treatment, etc., can be entered in a condensed form, and will always be ready for reference. Physicians who have adopted this method regard it as indispensable to them. A daily record of cases is important to every physician, if he acquires the habit of embodying an accurate account of symptoms, treatment, constitution, temperament, and every item calculated to throw any light on the case noted. If cases are noted in a precise, perspicuous manner, they occupy but little space and take but little room.

REGULAR ATTENDANCE ON MEDICAL MEETINGS.

Another means of improvement to all physicians is as regular attendance as possible on all meetings of county and State medical societies. Every physician should esteem it his duty to do his part to sustain these meetings, and, if necessary, make some sacrifice to attend them. In cities and thickly settled portions of the country there can be no excuse for

physicians neglecting their societies. In thinly settled sections of the country district societies often embrace a large territory and a regular attendance involves considerable sacrifice. And yet, in several such locations, where the members of district societies are widely scattered, there are well-attended, instructive and interesting meetings. The members have found what a great source of instruction and improvement these meetings constitute, and are willing to make some sacrifice and arrange their business so as to spend a day, or a portion of a day, once a month, in attending them, even when obliged to ride many miles to do so. There is much benefit to be derived from a friendly criticism of essays, reports of cases, treatment, etc., by the members, and an intimate personal acquaintance and free interchange of thought.

Well-organized county and State societies are also of great value to the community as well as the profession, and are essential to the maintenance of the National Association. In connection with these district meetings, it is easy to arrange an exchange of medical books and periodicals, as clubs can be formed to subscribe for various periodicals and enable physicians to have access to a variety of medical literature at a small cost. This plan is of great value to young physicians who cannot afford to purchase many books or subscribe for more than one or two periodicals, and are not located in cities or large villages where medical books can be obtained in public or society libraries. In all our cities, and in large villages, the public libraries contain many medical books and periodicals, and medical books of all schools of medicine are purchased by the librarians at the request of any physician who will take the trouble to fill out the blanks provided for that purpose.

IMPORTANCE OF BOOKS AND INSTRUMENTS.

The best investment young physicians can make of such funds as can be spared from their actual necessities is in the purchase of standard medical works and instruments of diagnosis from time to time. In regard to the expense of microscopes, and many other aids to diagnosis and medical im-

provement, there are erroneous ideas. There are microscopes costing from \$20 to \$1,000 or more, but Professor O. W. Holmes, of Harvard University, stated a year ago that he had accomplished his best microscopical work with a simple instrument costing only about \$30. If a physician can afford it, a microscope costing \$100 or \$150 is of great advantage, but for ordinary use a "student microscope," costing only from \$20 to \$40 will answer the purpose of most physicians. Many of the instruments for diagnosis before mentioned in this address can be purchased at a comparatively small cost. In the first years of a physician's life a judicious outlay for books, and instruments for diagnosis, midwifery and surgery, will prove a much better investment than real estate or stocks.

A HIGH MORAL STANDARD INDISPENSABLE.

In considering the means that are essential to advance the standard of medical education and elevate the profession and the community, we must urge on students and physicians the vital importance of established and correct principles of action. "The principle of unyielding rectitude is of invariable and universal application." Let all our graduates keep constantly in mind the sterling advice of Professor Mitchell to a graduating class in 1839: "Resolve to start in the race for honorable success under the guidance of just and proper views. The most important of these is an unflinching adherence to moral rectitude and duty. Be assured that if strict integrity be not always the shortest way to success and respectability, it is ever the most certain, the happiest, and the best. He who makes unbending rectitude his motto may experience difficulty in his efforts to get business in the midst of dishonest competition and rivals. But mark his course; though slow in ascending the rugged steep, he gains at length the lofty summit. Around him gather the warmest patrons, the most substantial friends, and he rises steadily in the confidence of all who know him. Nor is this all. He respects himself, for he has a conscience void of offense. He feels that the motives by which he is governed are right and safe, and he escapes the self-degradation which the unprincipled man,

sooner or later, realizes as the consequences of his unworthy course. And if he fails to accumulate a large fortune, he feels that he has gained a more substantial portion. Without the consciousness of truth and honor a man is poor indeed, although he may possess all the gold he desires, and you can achieve no lasting reputation, no true success or happiness in life, unless you are true to yourself, true to humanity, true to God."

MEDICAL LEGISLATION.

An important means to elevate the character of the profession and the standard of medical science and practice, and which cannot fail to benefit the community, is the enactment of proper laws to regulate the practice of medicine, by the various State Legislatures throughout the country.

It is notorious that colleges of all schools of medicine have granted diplomas to many incompetent men, and our National Association and State societies should still continue to manifest their disapproval of this great wrong. Our Association, early in its organization, denounced this evil, and on June 27, 1873, passed the following resolution:

"*Whereas*, The correct treatment of the human body, when suffering from disease or accident, requires the highest degree of skill attainable by man; and

"*Whereas*, The people are almost wholly incapable of estimating the scientific attainments of medical practitioners; and

"*Whereas*, Diplomas have been freely granted by medical colleges, of all branches of the medical profession, to men grossly incompetent, and have thus ceased to be sufficient evidence of the scientific attainments of their possessors; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That we favor the passage of laws by the various Legislatures of this Union, making it necessary for every person desirous to engage in the practice of medicine, surgery, or obstetrics, to pass a fair examination in the fundamental sciences, comprehending a course of study necessary for the acquirement of a full knowledge of the science of medicine in all its branches."

This measure has been adopted in some of the States, and during the past year many of our members, in all parts of

the country, have urged its adoption in all States where no such law exists. Its importance is evident to every thoughtful physician, and although we may differ as to the details of such enactments in various States, we should all unite in our endeavors to secure the passage of such laws as will prove the greatest benefit to the profession and the community. There ought, also, to be laws enacted imposing penalties for the sale and use of fraudulent diplomas. The country is flooded with such diplomas from allopathic, homeopathic, and so-called Eclectic colleges. Our National Association and our State societies have done what they could to suppress this evil. In 1878 a college was expelled from our Association for granting a diploma to a student who had not attended the full course of lectures required by our by-laws, and it has shown a determination to rigidly enforce its regulation, not only against the sale of degrees, but also against granting them to incompetent men, which is as great a wrong as the direct sale of diplomas. The Secretary of the Association has held a correspondence with General Eaton, the Commissioner of Education at Washington, in relation to the sale of bogus diplomas in Europe, of so-called Eclectic colleges in this country, which will be laid before you. General Eaton assured him it was not a question of diploma-selling by any particular school of medicine, as diplomas had been sold in London and Berlin that were fac-similes of those issued by some leading allopathic, and one or two Eclectic colleges in this country, both in parchment and in signatures.

A prominent physician of New Haven, a graduate of a New York college, was informed by a friend in London that American diplomas could be purchased there, and that an agency was advertised by a "Doctor (?) E. A. Sturman, No. 145 Packington street, London, N. " He was incredulous and called to see him, when the man stated to him that he could procure him a diploma from almost any college in America for a consideration.

Last year I was shown what purported to be a diploma of one of our colleges, that a government official at Berlin had sent to a commissioner in New York, for the purpose of ascer-

taining whether it was genuine. It contained the names of but two physicians who had ever been connected with the college, and the signatures bore not the slightest resemblance to their handwriting. The other names appended to the diploma were those of physicians who had never been connected with the college, and two notorious New York politicians who were not physicians. What purported to be the seal of the college was an impression made by a trade dollar. After a thorough investigation the commissioner returned it to the authorities at Berlin, with the indorsement that it was a forgery throughout.

The investigation into the sale of American diplomas abroad, commenced by our representative at Berlin, ought to be prosecuted, and steps taken by our government to put a stop to this disgraceful traffic.

All of our State societies that have held their annual meetings have taken action in this matter in the right direction, and I trust that all will support the National Association in its efforts to aid the Commissioner of Education in his endeavors to put an end to the traffic, which is a stain on the whole medical profession of the United States.

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE.

Papers on a great variety of topics will be presented to the Association during the next three days. The special reports will embrace synopses of progress in every department of medicine, by physicians who are recognized as experts in the branches assigned them, and will be not only interesting and instructive now, but valuable for future reference when published in our Transactions. The subjects selected for addresses are of vital importance to the profession and the community, and are designated for general discussion by the Association. All members are desired to give a concise statement of their views on these subjects, and any new and valuable information in relation to them in their possession. The essays embrace many important medical and surgical topics, although, like the addresses largely devoted to Preventive Medicine.

The study of sanitary medicine for twenty-five years, with

observation in private practice, and in hospitals and asylums in all parts of this country and portions of the continent, has impressed me profoundly with the importance of the subject. Although not desiring other important questions to be superseded, the attention of the Association is earnestly requested for the topics to be presented connected with preventive medicine—mental and physical hygiene in the broadest sense.

The subject is not new to this Association, as our school of medicine has always devoted much attention to it, but its importance cannot be over-estimated, or its claims upon us too strongly urged; and I trust that all our colleges will soon make Public Hygiene a part of their curriculum, so that all our graduates shall enter the profession with as thorough knowledge on this subject as it is possible to obtain.

Hygiene is of very ancient origin. The Hermetic books, the Vedas, the Zend-Avesta, the Jewish and Babylonian Talmuds, the Bible, the writings of Confucius, and the Koran, all contain valuable hygienic, as well as moral, maxims.

The Chaldean Magus, the Indian Brahmin, the Egyptian priest, Moses and Mohamed, could exact compliance with their hygienic and sanitary precepts, because they united spiritual and temporal authority. Many of the maxims in the Hermetic books, the Vedas, and Zend-Avesta, are repeated in the Bible and Koran. Moses summed up the esoteric knowledge of the Egyptian priests in the sanitary and hygienic laws he framed for the children of Israel, the influences of which are still to be seen in the vital statistics of the Jews. Mohamed asserts that "The practice of religion is founded on cleanliness, which is one-half the faith and the key of prayer." The writings of Hippocrates abound with sanitary and hygienic maxims and precepts on public health, and contains sound advice on even such matters as the selection of localities for cities and dwellings. His writings evince a wonderful sagacity and almost intuitive wisdom in the knowledge of the nature and seat of diseases, and he made vast accessions to medicine, establishing it as a science founded upon observations and rational deduction. Many of his sanitary precepts, and observations on meteorology and climatic influences, are

accepted with little change at the present day. The writings of Celsus are largely devoted to hygiene, and frequent reference is made to this topic in the writings of all the great medical teachers in the early history of medicine. The sixth (folio) volume of Galen (edition of Chartier) is devoted entirely to the preservation of the health. But the individual contributions of these writers to sanitary medicine was comparatively small, and many of their maxims were the outgrowth of centuries of observation and experience.

There were physicians in the early history of medicine, as there are at the present day, who assumed that the medical profession was constituted to cure and not to prevent disease. As such men ignore the claim of preventive medicine, and only aim at giving medicine during a disease, the community are justified in looking on them as simply the administrators of drugs. But fortunately for the honor of the profession there have been physicians from the earliest existence of medicine as a science to the present time, who recognized a higher duty pertaining to it than the administration of drugs, and considered the prevention of disease as one of the highest and noblest of their duties.

In former times there was no scientific study of the laws of disease as they affect large masses of men, and there was some excuse for physicians confining themselves to the cure of disease; but there is no excuse for any practitioners of the present day pursuing such a course. The last thirty years have brought vast accessions to the knowledge of the laws of health and disease, and immense progress is being made every year in this direction. The mode and means by which various infections are propagated, the conditions which favor their diffusion, and the best methods for arresting their spread, have been carefully investigated by physicians in every part of the world, and followed by a success that often surprised the most sanguine sanitarians. With rare exceptions, infectious diseases can be prevented from assuming the proportions of an epidemic. It seems but a few years ago that the community, and even many physicians, ridiculed the assertion that small-pox could be "stamped out," in any city or town where

it appeared. To-day there is not a physician in the country who does not believe it possible. The same is true of typhoid fever, diphtheria and all infectious diseases, and the power to discern and extinguish infectious foci, and defend the community from the insidious approaches of the causes of such diseases, is in the hands of physicians everywhere, if authorized by municipalities to use it. But the time to "stamp out" infectious diseases is when they first appear, not when, after weeks of criminal neglect, they have assumed the proportions of an epidemic; although even then they can be suppressed, but not until after much needless suffering and great loss of life. In every municipality there should be a board of health authorized to fulfill this important duty. They should not be composed of political favorites, needy recipients of public assistance, or professional men only capable of carrying out existing police regulations, as is sometimes the case, but they should be men who have shown that they bear the real welfare of the community at heart, and are possessed of the necessary foresight, judgment, and accurate scientific knowledge to enable them to meet any emergency that may arise in the district under their control. Routine methods are as unsuccessful in sanitary medicine as in general practice, and as typhoid fever, diphtheria, cholera, etc., extend their ravages through wholly different media and assume a variety of forms in various sections of the country—each outbreak having its peculiar mode of propagation—peculiar methods must be adopted to meet, control, and stamp them out.

Your special consideration is requested for the addresses and essays on such subjects as defective drainage as a cause of disease; disposal of sewage; sewer-gas poisoning; water supply of towns; impure water as a cause of disease; drainage of rural dwellings; building ground in its relation to health; the nature and consequences of malarial poisoning; zymotic diseases; public and school hygiene; influence of inebriety on vital and criminal statistics; political economy of health; the effects of poverty on the vital statistics of the United States; the homes of the poor in our cities; infant

mortality; impure milk as a source of disease; the adulteration and impurities of food; physiological and hygienic instruction of patient; ventilation; influence of civilization on the duration of human life; suppression of syphilis; importance of sanitary legislation, and some others indirectly connected with sanitary medicine.

Among the writers are practitioners who have served for several years as city and dispensary physicians, and others who have accomplished much good as members of boards of health, sanitary commissions, school boards, and directors of dispensaries, hospitals and various public institutions, and have a practical knowledge of the subjects assigned them.

But it is not essential that all physicians should occupy such positions, or be experts in sanitary science, in order to understand and reduce it to practice, although in it, as in other branches of medicine, special study develops superior skill.

On every board of health there should be, if possible, a sanitary engineer, or some expert in sanitary science; but with the knowledge of the auxiliary sciences now acquired in a preliminary education, there are few well-educated physicians but what are capable of becoming competent health officers, and all ought to be able to comprehend and practice sanitary medicine. There are in our ranks many ripe scholars and skillful physicians, who have been educated in this country and abroad, and there are thousands who have as thorough theoretical and practical knowledge of their profession as can be obtained in this country, and who are well qualified by their solid scientific acquirements and common sense to accomplish inestimable good in advancing sanitary medicine.

Of its vital importance I need not speak. Every physician present knows the incalculable amount of suffering and death which is produced by the prevalence of diseases which might be prevented by observance of sanitary and hygienic laws. The venerable Professor Gross asserts "*that millions of people die every year from preventable diseases, due for the most part to man's ignorance or man's criminal neglect.*"

Professor Kedzie says: "Preventive medicine is now press-

ing its claims with an emphasis never before heard. The race demands of the profession not only to repair the ravages of disease, but to save them from its power. Follow the phalanx of human life as it marches on, and see how fast its ranks are depleted by deserters, till we arrive at three-score years, only to find a body-guard left. Admit that there are fixed climatic conditions unfavorable to long life; that accident and unavoidable conditions destroy a certain per cent.; pass over all the victims whom human foresight and prudence could not save, and what a fearful host still remains, cut off in their vigor and prime by preventable causes. See consumption like the hovering wings of the angel of death overshadowing the race; cholera and yellow fever sweeping over the land and sowing the earth thick with graves; intemperance sending body and soul to the demon's hell; typhus and typhoid gathering the sheaves of the harvest of death; consider these and a score beside, and then tell me if there is no work to be done in the fields of preventive medicine. 'Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest.' The old superstitious which connected unusual sickness with the wrath of offended Deity have faded in the light of science. The black death, cholera, typhus, scurvy, etc., are as truly the penalties of violated sanitary laws as is death by submersion in water. As science sheds more fully its light upon these dark and perplexing questions we see more and more clearly that sickness and pain are the fruits of our own misdoings. The 'mysterious providences' about which we have heard so much are resolving themselves into 'defective drainage,' 'sewage contamination,' 'unwholesome food,' 'poisoned walls,' 'no ventilation,' etc. The school-rooms, the lecture halls, the court rooms, the temples of religion, the halls of legislation, the hospitals, the prisons, and even our secret bed-chambers, are full of subtile poison. Go into our cities and villages and see the festering graveyards pouring their literally deadly contents into every well in the vicinity; the cess-pools pouring rectified death through all the subsoil. An epidemic of dysentery or typhoid fever sweeps over the afflicted community, and men bow themselves before 'the mysterious providence,' and roll

up their eyes as though they were objects worthy of deepest pity. Away with the impiety which would flout our filth in the face of Deity, and say that these afflictions come from His hand. The voice of God thunders as of old: 'Wash you, and be ye clean,' if you expect His favor—clean in your person, and homes, the food you eat, the water you drink and the air you breath; clean in thought and in life."

DUTIES OF PHYSICIANS.

The writers on the subjects to which I have called attention will describe the hidden sources of disease and death that surround us on every side, and will doubtless give much valuable practical information as to the best methods of preventing much unnecessary loss of health and destruction of life. There is not one of our Association but who can do something in this work; there is the same necessity for its prosecution in the country as in the city. The evils described exist everywhere; and in every house to which physicians are called, in cities, villages, or hamlets, it is as much a part of their duty to investigate the causes of preventable diseases, and take measures for their prevention, as to examine and prescribe for their patients.

In some of our cities physicians are compelled to notify the boards of health of any cases of small-pox, scarlet fever, diphtheria, typhoid fever, etc., that are under their care, and, although not held responsible for the sanitary condition of the places in which their patients reside, they are expected to understand the approved methods of proceeding in such cases. Some physicians who comply with the requirements of boards of health in the cases they are called to attend, do not attempt to remove sources of disease that come to their notice accidentally, where they are not called upon professionally. They assert that such matters are no more their business than that of any citizen. The notification of the board of health or other proper authority, of any city or town, of all sources of disease that come to their notice, is certainly an imperative moral obligation on all citizens, and all should

be legally obliged to perform this duty. But this duty devolves especially upon physicians from the nature of their education and profession, and they who neglect or ignore it commit a crime. If an accident occurs in the street or highway, and any physician stands silent in the crowd or rides by on his professional rounds without stopping, when his services might lessen suffering or save a single life, he would be denounced as inhuman, if not morally guilty of manslaughter. Non-professional citizens who are present are not expected to do anything except such little service as experience or common sense enables them to perform; but every one expects the physician to exercise his best professional skill, whether he is called upon or not, because his position has qualified him for that service. The medical profession are the guardians and conservators of the health of the community, and whenever they neglect or ignore any opportunity to prevent the germination or spread of disease, they commit a much greater crime than when they leave a victim of an accident to suffer or die. In the latter case only one life is involved, in the former the health and lives of hundreds, and sometimes thousands, are endangered.

Another duty that devolves upon us is not only to give our patients sufficient knowledge of physiology and hygiene to enable them to take proper care of themselves, but also to awake a consciousness in them of the necessity of sanitary measures. Communities are generally apathetic toward general causes of disease, except so far as they are personally concerned, and they need to be taught that private and public health are inseparable, in order to make them submit willingly to whatever sanitary laws may be enacted for their benefit. Our people make the laws, and we must endeavor to educate the public mind to the necessity for sanitary measures before they can be enacted and sustained. That this is practicable is evident from the readiness with which the people have complied with the ordinances in some of our large cities in relation to various infectious diseases, and restrictions on tenement-houses, drainage, plumbing, etc., for the prevention of disease, when, a few years ago, they complained of their rights

as citizens being infringed, on the passage of ordinances to prevent the spread of small-pox. They understand now that sewer-gas, bad drainage, crowded and filthy tenement-houses, and other like causes, propagate disease, and are as dangerous to health and life as infectious diseases, and are willing to sustain the ordinances issued to remedy these evils with the same alacrity that large communities have submitted to quarantine regulations during the prevalence of cholera and yellow fever.

We must persevere in our work of enlightening the community, and show them that there is more danger to health and life from infectious diseases that are always lurking in their midst, and from bad drainage, sewer-gas, poor ventilation, etc., than from cholera and yellow fever epidemics, and that these can be prevented by sanitary measures.

The people can be educated until they will demand laws to protect their health and life from the danger of preventable diseases as they now demand protection from outlaws. The State makes municipalities responsible for damage to health, life and property, from defective streets or highways; and it ought to make them responsible for all suffering, sickness, and deaths, caused by pestilential emanations from filthy streets and alleys; badly-constructed sewers, whose stagnant accumulations of corruption exhale poisonous gases from every street-opening and house-connection; crowded tenement-houses, reeking with corruption, and from intemperance, prostitution, and every source of preventable diseases.

The State enacts and enforces prohibitory laws regulating places for the sale of liquors, requiring all persons purchasing to register their names and residences. It has the same right to regulate houses of prostitution, and require men and women who frequent them to be registered, and submit to certain restrictions when they become diseased. Intemperance is a great evil, but syphilis is a greater source of suffering, disease and death in every community, and every effort should be made to suppress it, as well as intemperance.

The protection of life and health is one of the most sacred

functions of the law, and we should demand of the State such sanitary enactments as will best accomplish this result.

In pursuing this work of sanitary reform, it is not expected that physicians will devote themselves to it to the exclusion of all other business, or that any one physician can fulfill all the duties here mentioned. But every practitioner can do something every day, during his rounds in city or country, to advance sanitary medicine, and benefit the community in which he lives. This work does not preclude physicians from acquiring a competency, but it demands some sacrifice of time and money. This sacrifice we should all be willing to make, instead of devoting all our energies to the acquirement of wealth, and living only for ourselves.

The imperfect outline I have given of what I consider should be the qualifications and duties of the members of this body, and of all physicians, is no mere ideal. There are thousands of just such conscientious, earnest, studious, and practical physicians, throughout this country. They may not achieve eminence, but they will have the consciousness of having performed their duty. Few, even of our best physicians, ever acquire more than a local reputation, as their duties and labors seldom give them the notoriety or prominence that attaches to men of some other professions; but everywhere the faithful physician is respected and esteemed, and none stand higher in the community.

Of the work I have pointed out for our Association, much can be accomplished by those in middle life, and some by the aged; but the work of the future, and some of the present, will devolve largely upon the younger members of the profession.

If any feel that these duties and responsibilities are too arduous, remember that the practice of medicine involves all these, and more, and you assumed them in choosing your profession. *Noblesse oblige.*

If the demand upon your time and services seems great or difficult, then use your best endeavor to perform each day the duty lying nearest you.

If life seems too short to accomplish the work assigned you, be assured that the longest life is short, if we live only to ourselves, and that the shortest life is long, if passed in laboring for the good of humanity.

" We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not breath ;
In feelings, not in figures on the dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs, when they beat
For God, for man, for duty. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.
Life is but a means unto an end—that end,
Beginning, mean, and end to all things—God. "

